

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 17, and 19 are canceled. Claims 4, 18, and 20 are amended. No claim is added.

In the February 10, 2004, Office Action in this patent application, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (hereinafter "the Office") rejected Claims 1-3, 17, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by the teachings of U.S. Patent No. 6,430,638 to Kessler. Prior cited and applied references U.S. Patent No. 6,237,043, issued to Brown et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,794,004, issued to Lindholm et al., and U.S. Patent No. 6,374,286, issued to Gee et al. have been withdrawn. Applicant appreciates the allowability of Claims 11-16. Furthermore, applicant appreciates the allowability of Claims 4-10, 18, and 20 if they were rewritten in independent form to include limitations of the base claims and intervening claims.

Without admitting to the propriety of the rejection and objections of the Office, applicant has amended Claims 4, 18, and 20 according to the suggestions of the Examiner. Independent Claims 4, 11, 18, and 20 are clearly patentably distinguishable over the cited and applied references. Claims 5-10 and 12-16 are allowable because they depend from allowable independent claims and because of the additional limitations added by those claims. In view of the foregoing remarks, applicant submits that all of the claims in the present application, as amended, are clearly patentably distinguishable over the teachings of cited and applied references taken alone or in combination. Thus, applicant submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and reexamination of the application, allowance of the claims, and passing of the application to issue at an early date are solicited. If the Examiner has

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any remaining questions concerning this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the applicant's undersigned attorney at the number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service in a sealed envelope as first class mail with postage thereon fully prepaid and addressed to Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on the below date.

Date: May 10, 2004

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